

Aberhafesp

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Introduction

Aberhafesp is situated beside the B4568, 4km west of Newtown. The church is an isolated structure, accompanied until recently only by Aberhafesp Hall. New housing developments are now spreading around and to the west of the hall. The church and hall occupy the lower northern slopes of the Severn valley and face each other across the Aberhafesp Brook. The road below follows the edge of a river terrace.

This brief report examines Aberhafesp's emergence and development up to 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core provides a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Numbers in brackets are primary record numbers used in the HER to provide information that is specific to individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).



Aberhafesp, photo 06-c-0117, © CPAT, 2012

History of development

The church dedication and its valley-side location suggest that there was an early medieval ecclesiastical foundation established here, but nothing further can be determined about it.

Aberhafesp is first documented as *Aberafh*' in 1254, though as with other references from 1254 and 1291 this was the name given to the church and carries no implications of a settlement. *Aberhauesp* is documented in 1330. The name means the 'mouth of the Hafesp', alluding to the Aberhafesp Brook which runs to the west of the church.

Nothing is known of Aberhafesp's medieval history, but the sparsity of settlement round the church on 19th century maps points to this being a church settlement rather than a nucleated one.

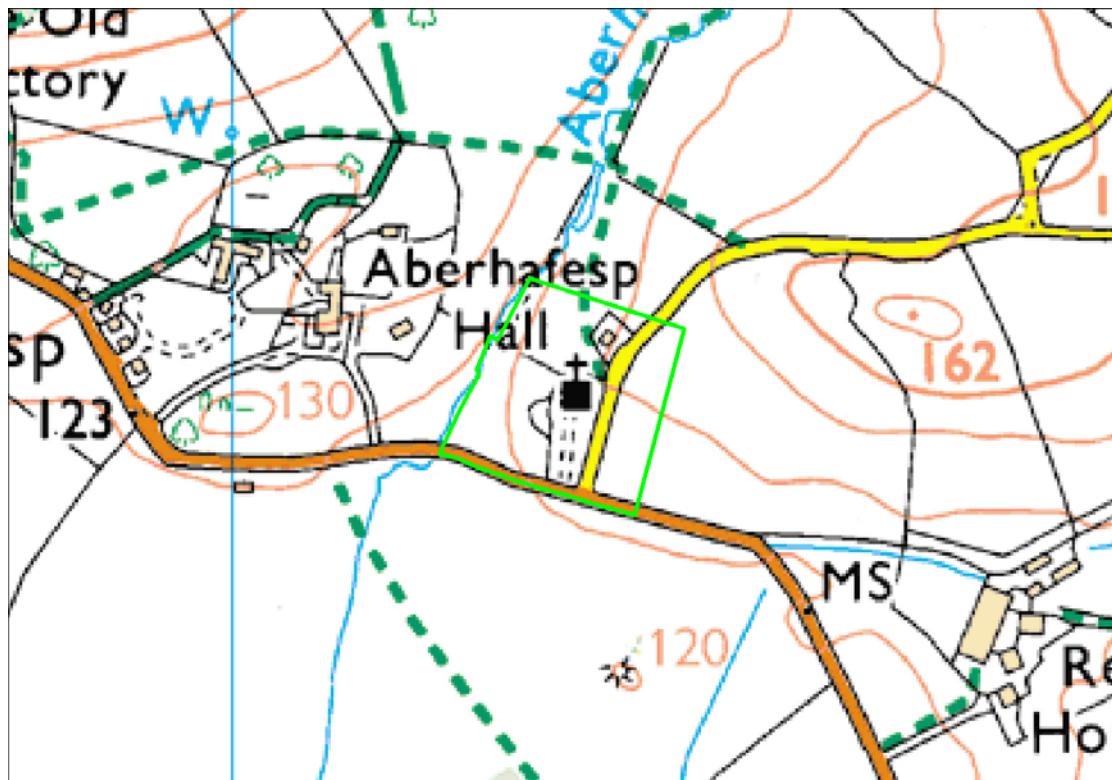
The heritage to 1750

St Gwynog's church (7551) was rebuilt about 1857, though some medieval walling was retained. From the medieval building came the 15th century roof and some 18th-century wall memorials, but most of the furnishings and fittings are contemporary with the new church.

The churchyard (7552) was originally a sub-rectangular enclosure and its former boundary can still be detected south of the church where the burial ground was extended in 1890.

Aberhafesp Hall (20517) is a Grade II listed building constructed around 1675 and is one of the earliest brick buildings in the region. Originally a gentry home, it has now been subdivided into several flats.

No obvious earthwork traces exist in the vicinity of the church to suggest an earlier nucleated settlement, and there is little to indicate how the landscape here has been modified over the centuries.



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